From: Ralph Sickinger (R2)
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/8/02 6:51pm
Subject: Proposal for Resolution to United States v. Microsoft Settlement

Dear Sir(s) or Madam(s):

I respectfully submit the following proposal as a possible penalty against Microsoft:

My proposal is quite simple: Microsoft should be compelled to release the complete source code for Windows 98 to the public domain.

This proposal has the following benefits:

1) It is simple and inexpensive to implement. It would be far less "traumatic" or difficult to implement than (for example) splitting up the company.

2) It would benefit the public: one of the most significant injuries to the consumer as a result of Microsoft's actions is the lack of stability in the Windows OS. By comparison, Linux, which is open source, is VERY stable, because there is a large developer community that works at fixing bugs that appear. The Windows community could benefit greatly from having an open-source version of the Windows OS available.

3) It would be reasonable: Windows 98 is now 3 year-old technology; it is significantly behind Windows 2000 and Windows XP in terms of it's development. Also, it is a major iteration behind Windows 2000/XP; as a result, any competitor desiring to compete against Microsoft, would not be able to compete directly against Windows without some significant effort. At the same time, Windows 98 is still (just barely) current enough to not be worthless to the public.

Microsoft has not had to focus on the consumer, or be responsive to the consumer, since it does not face any significant competition in the OS segment. A public domain version of Windows 98 (or a variation of the OS further developed by a corporation) would provide consumers with another choice for an operating system that could still run the current generation of Windows software packages.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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